

E 423

.G783

Copy 2

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005030857





Bound in paper.

TO THE
HON. W. J. GRAYSON.

copy 2

E 423

.G 783

Copy 2

TO THE HON. W. J. GRAYSON.

YOUR letter to the Governor of South-Carolina has just appeared. No inconsiderable compliment was paid you in the eagerness with which all classes of your fellow-citizens hastened to obtain copies for their perusal. You have enjoyed in more than ordinary degree, the confidence of your fellow-citizens. You have represented them in the Federal Council, ably and truly. You enlisted yourself in the last struggle between this State and the Federal Government, and joined the ranks of that party which braved the power of the President, enforced by a submissive and obedient Congress. You merited, you received, and have enjoyed the confidence of those who knew you. When you chose to hold under the Federal Government, the place of Collector of its customs, all were gratified. Though well understood as not entertaining the opinions of that large majority in this city and State who advocated the doctrines of the democratic party, you had no supporters more steadfast than those who belonged to that party. They sustained you a whig, in office, under a democratic President. In no way in which men could show their affection, confidence and respect, have they ever been wanting. They felt that however you might differ with them on mere questions of party, whenever the time arrived that would test the fidelity of the citizen, and the duty he should render to the State, in the imposing crisis so rapidly hastening on, you would be found where you ever had been, rendering, and proudly offering your allegiance to the State of South-Carolina. That if, in so doing you should incur danger or expose yourself to sacrifice, it would make the duty more pleasant to you. And the more helpless, and exposed the position of your State, the more glory would you feel in standing foremost among those, who were arming for her defence, not with the spirit of lip service, but the more hardy and enduring temper that perils life, liberty and honour in her cause. We had no reason to suppose that you had any doubt on the present absorbing question of the day. You were known to have a personal interest in the question. But still more, you were known to have sympathized, and deeply too, in the present attitude of our State, and her sister slaveholding States. You were known to have smarted under the lash which an insolent majority had attempted to apply to us. You were known to have felt, that the aggressions with which we were not only threatened, but which were put upon us, must have an end, and also a remedy. That with the unprincipled combinations through whose agency these measures had been brought to their present unhappy maturity, there would be no end. That Congress would not and could not afford a remedy. You were known to be where we

15559
204

all now are: RELYING ON OURSELVES FOR OUR ONLY PROTECTION. It is our painful duty to examine those reasons, as set forth in your letter, which have induced you to forsake your position, and abandon your State. To maintain the propriety of your position, you have been forced to announce a proposition, which will no doubt startle every man in the slaveholding States. I choose to state it in your own language. "It cannot, then, with any justice, be said, that there has been any infraction of the Constitution in the measures lately adopted by Congress. Neither can it be asserted that public opinion in the Southern States has ever given any clear and unmistakeable evidence of conviction on the part of our people that they can no longer continue their social, civil and political relations with the Northern States," p. 17. I had not supposed that in the Southern States, with the exception of a few who have returned from Washington with the reputation of having sold their country, there lived any who did not entertain the belief that the action of the last Congress had been obedient to that agrarian and free soil spirit at the North, East and West, which now rocks this Union to its centre. Is this mistake? If so believe me, that however unprincipled, we have been accustomed to consider the course of the non-slaveholding States, if you are right, our course has been more unprincipled and contemptible. If it is so, that we have no well founded discontent with the sentiment and conduct of our opponents, then have we been guilty of the cowardly pretext of assigning a false reason for our conduct. We have mocked the images of truth and justice, with our appeals, and stand exposed to all the self debasement that must attach to falsehood and hypocrisy. If such were my opinion, in this land, not for one moment would I dwell. If I could believe that such were my fellow-citizens, I should depart from them, without regret, other than such as I would feel in leaving the bone of the honoured dead resting in a land so obnoxious to the censure of all honest men. I should endeavour to forget that I was born among such a people; and in the same proportion in which I now thank my God, who cast my lot in life amidst this people, would I then sorrow in profound humiliation at the curse to which I would feel I had been subject. But it is not so. You have done us all great injustice. We have not the satisfaction of feeling that in the estimate we have made of our wrong we have been honestly mistaken. There has been too much time—too much discussion. In Congress and out of Congress—In popular assemblies—in private circles—at the private fire-side—in the temples dedicated to the worship of God—in all of these, has this question been again and again presented to us. The rays of light from every imaginable quarter, have been concentrated and thrown upon it. Passion could not mislead us, for mere passion would have passed away in the length of time through which the discussion has run. Prejudice if it created, could not have supported the opinion, for it has been too often exposed nakedly to us, to leave us that pretext. If we have erred, we have wilfully erred. If we exaggerate, intentionally have we done so.

It is then in no idle spirit that I take up your proposition, that "i cannot with any justice be said that there has been any infraction of the

Constitution in the measures lately adopted by Congress." I do so not only to satisfy you, if possible, that there has been and is; but moreover, to wipe from the escutcheon of the State, a stain which there would be indelibly impressed, if you were right.

Can you go to California with your slaves? No. Can you go to Georgia? Yes. If you can to the latter, and not to the former, why is it so? Because of the so-called constitution of California. Who made that constitution? Do you know? If California had tolerated slavery in its constitution, could she have been admitted? Certainly not. What then induced her admission? The prohibition of slavery. Can you deny it? If so, you and I have widely differed in our reading of the debates of the last Congress. If, then, the prohibition of slavery was the inducement which led to the admission of that State into the Union, is not that prohibition an insult and injury to you? If it is an insult and injury, does it not demand your interference? If it is an insult and injury committed on you, with the constitution held before it to screen its iniquity, but that charter so mutilated and torn, that through it may be seen the infamous conduct attempted to be practised behind it, does it not admonish you of unscrupulous oppression, hesitating not at the desecration of all political justice, if it but aids in the accomplishment of the impious work? You are a citizen of South-Carolina. South-Carolina is one of the sovereign States, to which the Territory of California belonged. How did she acquire the right? It resulted from the Mexican war. Did South-Carolina furnish her quota of men? Yes. Did she supply that Federal Treasury, from which the expenses were paid? Yes. Does she contribute still to those resources, from which the unpaid debt is to be defrayed? Yes. She was, then, in all respects, entitled to a portion of that which resulted from the war? She had some rights. What were they? What are they? While the Territory of California was territory, she was entitled, in common with any other State, to the enjoyment of that which belonged to her in common with them. But, immediately upon the acquisition of that territory, came that revelation of mighty treasure, which at once drew to the new land, adventurers from all parts of the world. Scarcely do they land, when they erect themselves into a so-called government, and call for admission into the Union. Do they, in so doing, continue to afford you, as a citizen of South-Carolina, the right to go there? No; they prohibit you. This is the right you now have! Through what agency was this effected? *The Congress of the United States!* And you call upon me to admit, that in this, there is no justice in saying that Congress has been guilty of an infraction of the constitution. Have you not been identified with an institution, which has been interdicted? are not you classed with political lepers? is not your republicanism denied, your equality scouted, your right, as a citizen of Carolina, to go to California, with all your rights as a citizen of Carolina, spurned? are not all these things before you? do you not see them, feel them? do they not flush your cheek, and chafe your spirit? And are these things no infraction of the constitution? Believe me that I can find no excuse for one who does not feel that these are wrongs of the deepest hue, and calling for the highest sacrifices, except

it be in the unbounded adherence to the slavish doctrine, that the king can do no wrong.

Satisfied with California, it creates no surprize that you should see nothing in the act, creating a boundary for Texas, to excite your indignation. But, do you seriously believe that the Congress of the United States has the right to speculate upon the necessities of the people of a State, and apply the money of these sovereign States, to purchase a part of its soil, *for the purpose of confining the area within which slavery should exist?* You must say, no. Yet that is the case with Texas. And there is not one man in Congress, whose word carries belief with it, who will not admit, that this and this only was the object that suggested and concluded that most infamous bargain. Why, sir, where are we? In what atmosphere are we breathing? Have we the bow-string before our eyes, that we are afraid to think? Can *anything* so delude the understanding, and steal away our intelligence—can any thing make us so forgetful of the value of political liberty, that we could be made to consent, to shut our eyes and be robbed, least, if we seem awake, our throats should belong, with our purses, to the robber? Congress dare not avow the robbery, but we know that it is done. Shall we hesitate in exposing the detection, until the culprit makes confession? Or, shall we wait until our masters shall be so thoroughly satisfied of our weakness, that they will rob, and tell us that they did so? No Sir. Believe me, that this bribe to Texas is not without its parallel. Your cultivated taste has often led you to linger over those pages which portray the stirring incidents of that people, who, rising from obscurity, in course of time, became in themselves a world. You have admired that virtue and courage which sustained them in the defence of their homes, and when these qualities grew stronger, enabled them to carry their language and laws among those whose natures were as savage as the wilds in which they roved. You have seen one cloud, and then another, and still another, come between you and the noon-day brilliancy of their history, until the light of their life was gone, and the transient gleams that arose only from their own corruption, enabled you to see how low their fortunes had fallen. You missed the voice of the people proclaiming whom they chose for their rulers. You saw the gold of the powerful buying the sword of the soldier, to cut for the spoiler the road to that distinction and the enjoyment of that power, which once was sacred to merit and virtue. You have read of the influence of money in the history of the most powerful nations of antiquity. You may see another illustration in our own day.

Permit me to say, that in no part of your letter, am I more surprised at the argument which has satisfied you, than that which you have adopted in relation to Utah and New Mexico. I infer that you think it a matter over which we should rejoice, that in the Territorial bills for these places, the Wilmot Proviso was not inserted. But have you satisfied yourself why this Proviso was not adopted? One reason only exists, and that is because there was no necessity for it. A more secret, more subtle, more dangerous, but equally effective plan was discovered. These reasons made that plan preferable to the Wilmot Proviso. But if it had been left to the Congress of the United States, to say whether

they would adopt the Wilmot Proviso, or reject it, without the adoption of some kindred measure, you would have soon seen for what you ask us to be thankful. The Wilmot Proviso prohibited the introduction of slavery into these territories. This was the object. It had to be attained. There was a choice only as to the means. What were these means? They were two. Congress might adopt the Wilmot Proviso, or inasmuch as the Mexican laws had abolished slavery in these territories before they were ceded to the United States, *it might be understood* that these Mexican laws should be held as being now of force. The latter was the chosen plan. And in order that it should fully succeed, Congress declared that it was not competent for the Territorial Legislature to act upon the question of slavery. This was making assurance doubly sure. The Mexican laws prohibited slavery. It was understood they should continue of force. And least by any chance the Legislature of these territories might be induced to tolerate slavery, all power over the subject was expressly denied. It was well supposed that the Mexican laws were sufficient, especially when any repeal of them was prohibited. Am I wrong in saying it was more secret, more subtle, more dangerous, and equally effectual, with the Wilmot Proviso? But you say the Mexican laws were not adopted by Congress. True, there was no act passed to adopt them. But I say it was understood they should be the substitute for the Wilmot Proviso. The test is this. Can you now go there with your slaves? You cannot. Why? Because the Mexican law will not allow you. By what authority do the Mexican laws exist in these territories? By the authority of the Congress of the United States. Did any one in either Hall of Congress dare to get up and say that in rejecting the Wilmot Proviso, it was intended even indirectly to affirm the right of the slaveholder to go there with his slaves? Not one. And are we so reduced, that we must thus compromise with our wounded feelings? Have we no balm, save that which while it seems to cure our wound, robs us of our senses? For what good end shall we thus dally with our honor, and patch up truces with our understanding? Will patience restore us to our equality? Will the conscience of those who degrade us, give us back our rights? Does power become tamed by submission? Is freedom preserved by never ending submission? When *we know* the spirit and motive that prompts to the commission of an act, shall we forbear because prudence may induce our oppressors to conceal the purpose which governed them? When you joined your State in resisting the Tariff act, what did you do? You nullified an act giving undue encouragement to manufactures. But who so named that act? You and those who opposed it. Its friends said it was a bill for raising revenue. A purpose in itself constitutional. You then disdained to have your vision obscured with a cobweb. You treated the matter as it was *meant*, and not as it was *expressed*. You went to the *spirit*, and heeded not the *letter*. You felt that if you were *oppressed*, it did not matter *how* it was done. Whether you were robbed or cheated, you were equally the loser, and for your loss, must be redressed. As it was with you then, so it is with us now. A deep, honest, religious conviction has satisfied us, that our political existence is overcast, if not entirely overthrown. That Congress has become the

obedient instrument through which a series of oppressions have been made, sapping our strength, and subverting our institutions. We have been placed under the ban. We have been debarred the enjoyment of property that belongs to us, because that property is said to be anti-republican. The foundation therefore of the argument which excludes us, invites the Federal Congress to remodel our institutions even in our own States. For it is made the duty of Congress to guarantee to each State a republican form of government. The evil then is at our own door. Its train is already laid beneath our dwellings. The match is about to be applied. We have waited until we must choose between our own destruction, or that of those who so conduct themselves. One moment is left us, and you exclaim to us, pause still longer. I am sure you do not know that your judgment has been fearfully swayed in estimating the danger to which we are exposed, when you ask us to pause. Better would it be for him to pause, whose descending blow will save his own life: better for him to stop, whose utmost speed will but multiply his chances of escape from destruction: better for him to slumber, who locked up in regions of ice, knows that the sleep which courts him to its embrace, will be the sleep of death; than that we should pause in our resolves—stop in their execution, or slumber amid the dangers which encompass us.

But you distinguish between the sources through which this danger approaches us. You consider its origin *social*, not *political*. That it is the act of *individuals*, and not that of the Government. This was the Syren song that first lulled the slaveholding States into that passiveness and inactivity, which have been so long practised. Had the stand been taken at the first appearance of the smallest speck, that we now take, far better might it have been. Although no human agency could probably do more than defer the time at which new combinations of States would arise from this present confederation, it might have been that our separation would not have been marked by the angry feelings which now have been developed. But we were told to be patient, and we were patient. We were advised to wait, and we did wait. But while thus patient, and thus waiting, how changed has become the appearance of that which is opposed to us. It has swelled to gigantic proportions. No longer despised, its voice is heard potential in all popular assemblies, and the Congress of the United States dares not oppose its violence and sway. It has become an element of *social* life and *political* existence. It is taught to the young children in their schools—becomes the confirmed opinion of the rising generation—while unprincipled demagogues, still lash it on to that consummation of its fury, which only will end in the attempt to subvert the institution of slavery in the States where it now exists.

When you say that the spirit of emancipation is a *social*, and not a *political* evil, do you believe that it does not influence and govern the deliberations of Congress? Do you not know that, if a few honest spirits are found, bold enough to venture upon giving to the South what the most niggard conscience cannot withhold, that the most exalted reputation and loftiest dignity cannot shield them from the punishment prepared for them? Do you not remember the case of Daniel

Webster? Who would have supposed that Massachusetts would ever have abandoned Mr. Webster for doing that, which Massachusetts sent him to Washington to do, and swore him to perform? Yet is it so. Though with no lavish hand, nor overflowing generosity, Mr. Webster admitted that we had some rights, and were entitled to be protected in them. At once there came upon him a storm, to avoid the fury of which, he was forced to abandon that seat in the Senate Chamber which he had filled with such world-wide renown, and leave to another the difficult task, of reconciling his conscience with the reckless exactions of a fanatical and licentious party. Is not the case of Mr. Webster sufficient to satisfy you that the voice of abolition no longer is confined to the distance, but now rings throughout the halls of Congress, and drowns in its din every thing that may be said against it? What has been the fate of Mr. Dickinson? He has dared something, too. Yet where has he found his reward? The commentary on his conduct will be seen in the amalgamation of all classes of the democratic party, and the adoption of John Van Buren; while the whig party, not to be beaten in this infamous race, endorse the sentiments of William H. Seward, and boldly proclaim that the constitution of the United States, so far as it tends to the protection of slavery, is against the law of God, and the "higher law" absolves them from all obligation to enforce the provisions of the constitution, which they have sworn to protect and defend. What candidate for the presidency dares to disregard the voice of the abolition party? What candidate for Congress, is safe unless he caters for their vote? What member so abounding in moral courage as not to tamper with his oath, and, however he may delay, ultimately refuse that obedience which they so unscrupulously demand? That the action of Congress is made obedient to the demands of the free soil party is a fact which you alone deny. The press puts in its confession of the truth, and it is known that, in more than one instance, when members from the free soil States have been appealed to, to stand up and arrest the onward march of these movements, so rapidly bringing in their train the dismemberment of this confederacy, they have replied, We dare not! Dare not do what? Dare not do justice—dare not preserve the truth—dare not regard their oaths—dare not defend the constitution—dare not give to the slaveholding States what so rightfully belongs to them. And why do they dare not? Because of that overwhelming *social* sentiment, which has grown into a *political* element, governing and controlling every other consideration that could be presented. Our senators return to us, and say there is no hope. Our members come back, and say there is no hope. Our citizens, induced by the absorbing character of the question, go to the capitol to look with their own eyes, and they come back and repeat the cry, there is no hope. All feel that we have approached a point in our destiny—that a struggle is at hand, and cannot be avoided. The most timid are nerved to the encounter, and if there are any who have fancied that they could repose still longer, even since the adjournment of the last Congress, there has come rolling down upon them the echo of those gatherings in the free soil States, where principles which would become the wildest days of the revolution in

France, are hailed with loud acclaim, and all men devote themselves to their support. They have felt that now, indeed, there could no longer be a doubt. And you tell us that this is *social*, not *political*—the *act* of *individuals*, not the *government*—that it does not indicate danger—and that we are criminally regardless of the blessings we enjoy, if we entertain the idea of separating ourselves from those who have declared that our institutions are an abomination in the sight of God, and should be extirpated by the hand of man. Have you forgotten the pretext under which an interference with our institutions is attempted? Are they not declaimed against as a *political* evil? Has not State after State recorded its opinion on the subject? Put that opinion in the shape of resolves, and instructions to its members in Congress, and laid it down as a rule of conduct for them? Do not these members so recognize it, vote upon it, conform their conduct to it, adjust the operations of the government to it? And, with these things before you, you say the aggression is *social*, not *political*—that it is the act of individuals, and there is no cause of complaint against Congress! We all have heard of remarkable cases, where men of undoubted courage, for the moment influenced by some unaccountable panic, have falsified many well spent years in an hour, and stupefied with wonder the friends who admired them. But soon they became restored, and were themselves again. I trust that yours is a similar case. That you have hastily abandoned your matured opinions, for those which you have lately expressed; but whatever circumstance has operated on you, its controlling influence will soon be removed, and you again be, what you have been, and I trust ever will be.

You assert that there is no unmistakeable evidence of a conviction on the part of our people that they can no longer continue their social, civil and political relations with the Northern States. What do you consider the resolutions which have been adopted in all the slaveholding States? What do you consider the tone of the press, every where, at the South, except where it is disgraced by venal writers, who have prostituted their talents, and are now marked with the finger of scorn? What do you consider the popular gatherings which have been held in every slaveholding State? What do you consider the Nashville Convention? What do you consider the proclamation of Governor Towns? Or that of Governor Quitman? Are not these unmistakeable evidences? What do you consider the opinion of your best friends—men in whose patriotism you confide—in whose judgment you rely? What do you think of the conviction which I have no doubt has been present to your own mind? What do you consider that necessity which you say has forced you from your quiet? Sir, when you tell us that “the present occasion is too momentous” for you to remain quiet—when you admit that “it is pregnant with the fate of our whole country for all coming time,”—you furnish an answer to the doubt you suggest. These are evidences, and unmistakeable, of that conviction which you seem inclined to dispute. As decided as is the indication of a spirit to oppress, equally strong is that with us of a determination to resist. What would we be if it were not so? With social feelings spurned—political privileges denied—even religious communion declined—how low, indeed, would be our po-

sition if we had not the fortitude to adopt the conclusion that, when they who live on the other side of the Potomac forget—nay, more, spurn the fraternal relation, we could no longer even talk of a brotherhood between us. See Georgia, hampered and embarrassed with the traitorous counsels of those who abused her confidence, yet rising in her might, and going into convention of her people. Will you tell me the convention will do nothing? I tell you the convention itself is the evidence for which you inquire. True, thinking as I do, I should rejoice that the convention would now decide the question before us. But, even “trodden down,” it cannot be “trodden out.” The people are reading and thinking. They have begun the work. It is now a question only of time. As surely as any result may be predicted from the exercise of human agency, will the leading Southern States secede from a confederacy which, in its progress, has trampled down that political equality which was the keystone of the arch. Their approach to this end has been so gradual; so reluctantly have they yielded to those necessities which, piled one upon another, forced them to this conclusion, that their calmness has been mistaken for acquiescence, their patience for submission. They have stooped. But, when the insolent foeman would put his foot upon them, the pride of freedom and of manhood has lifted them to the highest position. Every paralyzing consideration has been cast off, and they are rallying under those banners which declare that they will “no longer continue their social, civil and political relations with the Northern States.”

You do not consider that the secession of the Southern States would be a remedy, and principally because you seem to consider that a confederation of these Southern States could not be had, or, if had, that internal discord would make such a confederation less desirable than that under which we now live. You propose to substitute a system of non-intercommunication. I need not stop to argue this point with you, that non-intercommunication is secession without the name—the only difference being that non-intercommunication would admit still of the existence of the General Government. But, if the States withdraw all communication with each other, of what use would be the Government? If it is not the Government of States identified with each other in sentiment and interest, it had better be abolished. And, how would you terminate intercourse? By law? Would you say that Northern produce should not be sold in a Southern market and to a Southern buyer? If so, the Northern man would have a right to say that, by the Constitution, he was allowed to buy and sell in any State! Would you leave it to the people to observe this compact among themselves? I need not show you how continuing in the Union, such an understanding, honestly observed by our own people, would be a premium for strangers to come among us, and grow rich before our faces by disregarding, on their part, the rule we established for our government. Of all the remedies which have yet been suggested, this is the least harmful; and, if we could be brought to its adoption, instead of arresting the movements now progressing against us, it would be a premium to multiply our injuries, if such conduct could only confirm us in this glorious mode of avenging our wrongs by destroying ourselves.

But, not for a moment have I been shaken by the expression of your doubt in the opinion I have formed, that, in a separate confederacy alone will we find our safety. No separate and independent States ever possessed so many concurring circumstances to unite them and keep them united as these Southern States. They are each identified with an institution peculiar to themselves. Of all the elements which combine to preserve political society and social order, none can be found more potential than domestic slavery, as it exists in these States. While it operates, on the one hand, to develope to its highest perfection civil liberty, it removes from the community in which it is found all possible tendency to licentiousness and agrarianism. The superiority which it gives to the white class makes them jealous of any arbitrary assumption of power; while the slaves occupy that position in labour that supplies the place of the lawless population who overturn governments at one time for mischief, at another time for bread. Without antagonism in interest, there can be no partial or unjust legislation. With the world for a market, the only emulation can be in the value of their productions. Asking the same political privileges—needing the same political protection—their communities resting on the same basis—their laws the same—their language, tastes, sympathies, the same—homogeneous in every thing that pertains to their political, civil or social relations—they would almost seem to have been marked out by Providence as a people created for an union among themselves, and with no one else. Possessing the most superior advantages in the cultivation of those staples which regulate the commerce of the world, the preservation of peaceful relations with these States would be as important to the commercial nations of Europe as preserving quiet within their own dominions. Better would it be for England that her Chartists should march unmolested through her land, than that these cotton-growing States should refuse her the supply she demands for those factories from which her thousands of a pauper population are supported in life. Naturally thus secured in the continuance of a commerce of which the carrying trade has poured out its rich returns into the laps of the Northern States of this confederacy, on its wings would come back to us that wealth which once was ours, and out of which we have been cheated. Thus introduced to the pathway in which national wealth would flow in to reward individual enterprise and labour, we should soon find ourselves advancing to the possession of all that enriches and adorns civilized life. The tribute we pay to a Government whose aim is but to oppress us, would, by its expenditure at home, develope among us those arts which are born with us only to perish, from want, in their cradle. While thus, in all the gentler walks of life, we would be destined to a state of improved existence, the organization of our society would ever make us and keep us, as a people, more than adequate to the defence of our altars and homes. With a military spirit almost naturally created within us, confirmed by a sense of its necessity and improved by our tastes, whilst it would be regulated by our position, we would find, at home, the most perfect protection against aught which would threaten us from without or within. Such, I feel, would be our condition.

Such would be the destiny which then would be realized by a people who have been driven by a series of unjust and partial enactments, to find themselves the producers of the wealth which enriched a continent, yet, year after year, growing more and more impoverished. I have not coloured the picture. We may yet live to see it true to the life. Yet, glowing as is the prospect, alone it would never have induced the people of the Southern States to contemplate the idea of a separate confederation. So strong with them has ever been the sentiment of fidelity, that, had the constitution been preserved and the government administered, according to the principles which called it into being, however great were the privations, or severe the disadvantages under which they laboured, not one man would have been found willing to abandon and destroy a compact into which he had entered in good faith. That our feelings have been alienated—that our affections have been extinguished—must be placed to the account of those who, for years, made us pay tribute to their insatiable thirst for gold, and, not satisfied with that, seek, in the most diabolical spirit, to plunge us into utter ruin, to gratify their sentimentality. That we have come slowly to the conclusion by which we now stand, is but the evidence that we have come surely to it. If, instead of benefit, there was danger in the path which our duty points out to us, it should not deter us. We should disgrace our history, if we would only vindicate our rights when we perilled nothing in the attempt. Gain could not seduce us; danger shall not deter us.

I have a few words to say in relation to the note which is appended to your letter, and which indicates your opinion on the Fugitive Slave Bill of the last session. I cannot see in it any cause for the satisfaction which it affords you. The Government could do no less. It should have done much more. It should have given us some guaranty for the preservation of our institutions against the assaults to which they stand exposed. I have already shown you that through the Government was our institution denounced. When that was done, how absurd is it to suppose that any remedial measure would be heeded. In one breath the Government repudiates an institution, and in another seems to invite the co-operation of the fanatic mobs of the free States, to aid us in the recapture of our fugitive slaves. If allowed to operate, it would have been nothing. But the timid, unconscientious acts of the Government have in no respect been more rebuked than in the scorn and contempt with which this measure has been received in the free States. I must ask, do you seriously believe that this law can be enforced? Do you believe it can even live in the Statute Book beyond the first session of the next Congress? Why, sir, do you not know that in every part of the North, East and West, in their smallest villages—in their largest cities, one unbroken sentiment of defiance has been uttered against the Government which enacts, and the officers who may dare to attempt the enforcement of the law? Have you not read that in New-York, at mid-day, in the Park, an immense gathering of negroes was had, at which the most violent language was used in reference to the slaveholding States, and this law supposed to be made for their peculiar benefit? Have you not seen the proceedings of the meeting in Boston, at which

was read a letter from *Josiah Quincy*, denouncing this law, and pledging its author to such concerted action as might be proper to annul it? Are you ignorant of the fact that at Lowell, when some fugitive slaves, who had been dwelling there, became alarmed and fled, that the citizens met and sent a committee to bring them back, with a pledge that the law should not be enforced? Sir, I might fill a volume with "elegant extracts," from the reported proceedings of these meetings. You ask us "not to mistake the brawling of the beastly rout," for the voice of the people." I should be glad to know from what quarter you wait for the "voice of the people?" While such has been the universal condemnation of this measure, point me, if you can, to the first meeting of consequence, in which there has been found the expression of a bold purpose to maintain the Government, even in this small act of justice to the South. You cannot. Meeting succeeds meeting, but like the waves of the ocean, each is lifted up with its infamous purposes, higher than that which preceded. Would you talk to such collections of the Constitution? Would you venture to tell them of justice? Would they know what you meant by forbearance? Yet to this mass of persons have we delegated the defence of rights, if we follow your advice, and pause in our career. You are right in this, that it is a "beastly rout. But you are wrong in supposing that it is any thing else but the people.

I have done. The quiet from which you have torn yourself, is not more agreeable to you, than that which I have forsaken, is to me. This task, honestly, yet imperfectly done, to that quiet I now again return. There to remain until the State shall designate the position that she chooses her sons to occupy. Let others take their course, mine is clear. And in that path which I am bound to follow, you will find thousands of generous spirits, who would peril life to maintain their equality in the Union and encounter greater danger to maintain their independence out of it.

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.





